Education Telecommunications Council

NOTES
FEBRUARY 17, 2000

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The February 17, 2000, meeting of the Education Telecommunications Council was held at Iowa Public Television and the following members were present: Robert Barak (Regents); Al Bode (ISEA); Merv Cronbaugh (IACCT); Mary Gannon (IASB); Ron Ellis for John Hartung (IAICU); Connie Maxson (SAI); David Montgomery (DE/CIANS): Kathryn O'Shaughnessy (ISEA); Pam Pfitzenmaier (IPTV); Kay Runge (DE/Libraries); Mary Travillian (AEA Boards); Emmett Vaughan (Regents); and Rich Gross (DE/Exofficio). Dean Borg (IASB); Paul Bowers (IAICU); Gene Gardner (IACCT); John Hartung (IAICU); Gary Hayden (AEA Boards); Mick Starcevich (SAI); and Gail Sullivan (DE) were absent.

The following guests were also present at this meeting: Winston Black (RTC 11); Darlas Shockley (RTC 15); Karen Lombard and Marlene McComas (RTC 5); Dennis Eitmann (RTC 13); Joan Ketels (RTC 7); Ellen Kabat (RTC 9); Kathy Guilgot (RTC 1); John Haack (RTC 10); Kitty Conover (RTC 3); Julie Burrell (RTC 14); Roger Rezabek (RTC 7); Dave Ludwig (RTC 13); John O'Connell (DE); Mark Schouten (ITTC); Tommy Thompson, Kent Friese, Mike Bacino, Mark Dayton, and Kathy Williams (ICN); Jim Sutton (ISEA); Lisa Anderson (ITS); and Gwen Nagel, Kathy Borlin, and Debbie Fiscus (IPTV).

I. ISSUES

I.A. New and Emerging Technologies

Rich Gross opened the discussion by reviewing the 3rd draft version of the "Education Telecommunications Council Technology Scenarios Survey" document. Throughout the discussion, Rich made note of suggestions/changes provided by members and guests. Rich requested that interested members and guests submit any additional comments on this document to him (rgross@iptv.org) by Feb 25.

In order to pilot the survey and a more intense listening process, a 4th draft version will be pilot tested with elementary teachers and administrators from Shenandoah on February 22. Based upon feedback from the Shenandoah teachers/administrators and ETC members, a fifth (and hopefully final) version of the survey will be developed after Feb. 25 and distributed statewide during spring 2000. The goal is to utilize a scientific survey that will rely on a stratified random sampling of elementary and middle school teachers, administrators, media specialists and board members. Discussion about potential areas of stratification for the survey were suggested (rural/urban/suburban; school district size).

I.B. ITS Request for Information on 21st Century Learning Initiative

Pam opened the discussion concerning the end user version of the Request for Information (RFI) on 21st Century Learning Infrastructure that was sent by the Information Technology Service (ITS) Division of the Department of General Services to ETC members and other interested educators.

Members and guests elected to give general comments about the RFI rather than to answer specific questions listed in the end user RFI. It was agreed by ETC members that the verbatim discussion from the meeting would be transcribed and that a committee of ETC members would finesse the comments for transmittal to ITS. Pam agreed to put out a call for two volunteers who would edit the transcriptions for the ETC.

Lisa Anderson, ITS, was in attendance at the meeting and noted the opinions and suggestions given by the members and visitors. She also stated that the end user RFI is on the ITS website in survey format so more suggestions/comments by members and guests can be made (see the RFI for specific url). The deadline for responding to the RFI is March 17, 2000.

I.C. Communication to "Local Folks"

Pam Pfitzenmaier gave an overview of past ETC and RTC discussions regarding the identified need to better communicate with local teachers, administrators, students, board members and parents about on-going and potential uses of the ICN for education. Discussion followed about what role the ETC and RTCs have in providing information and support to local users. Discussion and specific suggestions followed.

It was suggested that the ETC update the ITTC members at their meeting on March 8 about this on-going need since the ITTC also has an interest in ensuring local users have useful information.

I.D. Rates for ICN Internet

ETC members and ICN staff present at the meeting discussed the need for educational institutions to "forecast" growth in the use of ICN Internet. This is important because the ICN needs to anticipate increases required in bandwidth for Internet. Educational institutions need advance notice of price increases in ICN Internet fees prior to establishing their annual budgets. For AEAs and school districts, such price increases must also coincide with the e-rate application process.

It was discussed that the Regents universities have been actively working with the ICN to anticipate Internet growth used by their students and staff. However, the growth of school district/AEA Internet use is less certain. ICN staff expressed a need to better forecast Internet growth from the K-12 community. Tommy Thompson suggested that a small group be pulled together from the AEA staff to look further into the Internet growth issue. Mary Travillian suggested that the group should include the technical personnel at the AEA who can explain the amount of current Internet traffic as well as the AEA staff who plan the future uses of the Internet. Mike Bacino will meet with the AEA Media Directors in the near future to explain the situation. Mary Travillian will work with the AEA Media Directors to identify the appropriate AEA staff for such ICN Internet growth forecasts.

Discussion followed.

II. UPDATES

II.A. Technical Information Exchange (TIE)

Dave Ludwig, Iowa Western Community College and a member of the Technical Information Exchange (TIE) sub-committee evaluating the MPEG2 codecs, and Mark Dayton, ICN, provided an update of the Feb. 3 meeting between the TIE subcommittee, IPTV engineers and ICN engineers. At the Feb. 3 meeting, the participants reviewed the MPEG2 codecs to identify areas where the codecs needed improvement for use in educational settings. Both Dave and Mark agreed that progress is being made in improving performance with the MPEG2 codecs.

Two specific areas are the subject of immediate focus: a. Decreasing the video/audio "latency" exhibited by the MPEG2 codecs; b. Improving the quality of the video image of the codecs.

Discussion followed.

II.B. ICN Staff Update

Kathy Williams stated that the ICN and Todd are continuing to work on the issues in the in-advance scheduling software and are still targeting the February 25th deadline to have the most critical issues resolved. February 25th is the beginning of the scheduling process for fall 2000 semester when a large volume of ICN video requests will need to be handled by educational schedulers, especially at the regional and university level. Tommy Thompson updated the group on the areas where the ICN and IPTV engineers are focusing attention in resolving technical problems with ICN sessions. While some of the technical problems appear to be fixed, there are still recurring problems with some video sessions that have necessitated more troubleshooting efforts.

II.C. Legislative Issues

While it was hoped that a draft of the Governor's Information Technology Department bill might be ready for review, the proposed legislation was not available for the ETC meeting. Members and guests shared that some legislators may be drafting a different version of the Information Technology Department bill. When bill numbers are known, members and guests will be notified.

Appropriation targets for various appropriations committees are not public so there was no update on appropriations. Next week is the first funnel deadline of the session (see www.legis.state.ia.us for specific calendar dates on funnels).

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The February 17, 2000, meeting of the Education Telecommunications Council adjourned at 11:00 a.m. The next meeting of the ETC is scheduled for March 17, 2000, at Iowa Public

Television. The ETC Ad Hoc Committee on assessing elementary and middle school telecommunications/technology needs met from 11:00am-12:00pm to finalize the test process with Shenandoah staff members (see I.A. above).

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